

**William Short to Thomas Jefferson, November 25,
1807, from the Thomas Jefferson and William Short
Correspondence, Transcribed and Edited by Gerard W.
Gawalt, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress**

William Short to Thomas Jefferson, November 25, 1807

Philadelphia. Nov. 25-07

Dear Sir

I have postponed from day to day answering your kind & freindly letter of the 15th because I expected every day would fix the point of Monroes return or stay. The papers now tell us he has really taken leave-of course his return certain. This would in some degree diminish my original sin of Virginianism- which I suppose would, if necessary, be objected, by those who are fearful or not friendly; notwithstanding my present domicil &c. that I might state as washing it off.

My location has been often revolved on my mind since the receipt of your letter, & I have really looked for a carriage which might answer the purpose of my voyage & my residence at Washington, without being absolutely decided on the subject. If there were no obstacle but my residence there it would be removed without difficulty-but when I carry my mind forward to that circumstance, I cannot resist an impression which forces itself more, that I should soon appear in their eyes as one of a class (numerous at the Sitios in Spain, though rare with us) called praterdientes. Besides this being disagreeable in itself, it would I apprehend, counteract our views-as it would rouse the malevolent passions & place them in sentinel at the door. If I am to understand that the obstacle would be in the Senate chamber, I conscientiously believe, after frequent examination of the subject, that it would

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be rather increased than diminished by being in this way among them. In that body there are certainly divisions. To please one would be the sure means of displeasing another & one enemy in such cases is more efficient than many times that number of friends. This is in the invariable nature of things.

“L'amatié se rebute & le malheur la places,

Los haine est placable, & j'avais ne se lasse.”

As it is; if the

nature of my life since my return to America has acquired me no new friends, it has prevented my making new enemies. The more I examine the subject & myself, the more I am confirmed in the opinion, that I can in no way be presented to the Senatorial ordeal, in so favorable a manner as that which would require them to rely on your knowlege of me, & such knowlege as they may acquire if they chuse it from the records of the department of State. Those will vouch for my industry, my zeal & my unremitting attention to the vexious labors imposed on me. As to the rest, they would I should suppose, be willing to confide in you. You would of course feel the responsibility the greater-perhaps too great-of this it is not for me to judge.

This observation & study of the public & private springs of our governmental machine, would certainly be both pleasing & interesting to me. To a person intending to locate his ambition in domestic office it must be indispensable-but for transacting any particular business with a foreign government it would seem to me more necessary to possess a knowlege of the character & secret springs of that government. It is useless for me to say more, although I could enlarge much on this chapter, if I did not respect your occupied moments.

So much I have though it right to say without abandoning altogether the idea of paying a visit to Washington, notwithstanding my aversion to our roads &c. in the winter, & my

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apprehension that I should lose more than gain by it. The position of the lodging house you mention & the company I should find there would be particularly agreeable to me. I mentioned the house to Genl. Mason without mentioning the source of my information, & I was tempted for a moment to ask him to enquire if I could be accomodated there. But as he thinks that I once was to have accompanied him to N.York (of which I have not the most distant recollection) & shared little knowlege of my own mind &c. which story he says he told you & my other friends, I was afraid to commit myself with him; but if I should not go, he should be authorized to subjoin this also. I thought it but therefore to answer his very kind sollicitation by general terms of expression, that I had some thoughts of visiting his

region in the course of the winter.

Monroe's arrival will ascertain if negotiation is to continue. In that case perhaps you would chuse to join some one with Mr. P. The report now here is however that a minister for the negotiation is to be sent to this country.

I desire sincerely that Bonap. may give sincerely his aid in the affair in question. He would be the most effectual negotiator. But should it meet with delay, that would be the office of my prediliction. I have deceived myself perhaps in thinking I had some kind of right of seniority there. The present triumpherate has been long known not to draw together-of course to counteract each other. Had I gone last year to the camp of Bona. his interposition, if to be had, would have been had sooner.

The plan of taking measures as to foreign loans before they are wanted is wise in various considerations. To those people of routine my signature is so well known that it would have some effect as it would remind them of loans so punctually complied with-& I have no doubt that the U.S. could obtain more & on better terms than any other power at this moment. I do not know if I understood what you intend by the expression "our joint views." Speaking on that subject, but should this or any occasion occur in which I could render

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service to the public, & do honor to myself, in giving you satisfaction & showing that I have your approbation still, it would certainly make me very happy.

What you say of Genl. Moreau is worthy of you both. He, poor man, passed rapidly through this City eight or ten days ago to Pittsburgh, to go down the river to N. Orleans, return in Feby. & March to Charleston & from thence hither by land. Mde. Moreau is gone to France overwhelmed with grief, as is the Genl. for the loss of their only son. She returns next autumn, & in the mean time he means never to be stationary, & to endeavour to run from his melancholy mind. I remain my dear sir, truly sincerely yours, WShort

RC (Jefferson Papers, DLC)